



FLORENCE GRISWOLD MUSEUM

Home of American Impressionism

96 LYME STREET

OLD LYME, CONNECTICUT 06371

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Testimony of Jeffrey Andersen In Support of Senate Bill Number 530

Commerce Committee

Honorable Chairmen and Members of the Committee, my name is Jeffrey Andersen. I have the privilege of serving as director of the Florence Griswold Museum in Old Lyme and am here today to testify in support of Senate Bill Number 530 An Act Concerning the Funding for the Consortium of Connecticut Art Museums.

Few would argue about the fundamental value of the arts in our state. The arts open new horizons, inspire our citizens daily, and bring people together throughout our communities. But less understood is the tremendous economic impact of the arts. According to a 2012 independent study by the Americans for the Arts, arts and culture are an indispensable industry in the State of Connecticut – one that annually generates \$653 million in total economic activity. This spending supports the equivalent of 18,314 full-time jobs in Connecticut. Within this non-profit sector are seven leading independent art museums that have formed an effective consortium in order to contribute even more to the cultural and economic vitality of our state.

Located on eleven acres along the Lieutenant River in the historic town of Old Lyme, the Florence Griswold Museum is an internationally known art museum devoted to telling the story of Connecticut's contribution to our nation's art history. The Museum's beginnings hark back to the late 19th century when a group of American artists, drawn here by the beauty of the Connecticut landscape, formed the Lyme Art Colony, which became a center for Impressionist painting. Today their work can be found in museums around the world and of course at the Florence Griswold Museum. The Museum serves as a gateway destination for people visiting southeastern Connecticut, attracting 64,800 visitors annually to experience and learn about the state's cultural history. The economic impact of these visitors, when combined with the Museum's own expenditures, adds over \$4 million to our region's economy.

Our seven museums are intricately tied to the cultural heritage of Connecticut. Created by our state's citizens over the past century, we are grassroots organizations that closely reflect the cities, towns, and regions in which we operate. We benefit



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from the involvement of tens of thousands of volunteers. We serve nearly 60,000 school children from diverse backgrounds with arts education that change lives.

We are deeply "rooted" businesses whose jobs cannot be moved out-of-state or shipped overseas. We are resilient in nature but the recession of the past several years has taken a toll on our ability to sustain our public services. A partnership with the State of Connecticut would transform the ability of the Florence Griswold Museum to produce and promote new exhibitions, arts education programs, and festivals that will bring thousands of new visitors to our state. The impact of this partnership would add significantly to our local economy, with new funds spent by the Museum and by the cultural tourists that we attract. Collectively, our seven museums spend over \$15 million each year and have an economic impact of over \$25 million. As the economy gets back on track, this unique consortium of art museums is poised to increase its contribution to the state's cultural life and its economic vitality. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you about why I hope you will support Senate Bill Number 530 concerning funding for the Consortium of Connecticut Art Museums.